Financial Aid Fundamentals
for
Nevada Students Who Have Experienced Foster Care

What is financial aid, and how do I obtain it?
FINANCIAL AID (or STUDENT AID) = MONEY FOR SCHOOL

Financial Aid (or Student Aid) is an overarching term for academic financial assistance, most often used to refer to financial assistance for postsecondary education/college. Financial aid is used to help cover the cost of: 1) "traditional" postsecondary education/college credentials—such as *academic* associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees; AND 2) "fast track" career preparation credentials/programs that fall under the umbrella of Workforce Training/Development Programs. Nearly all forms of financial aid for postsecondary education-related expenses (including both school and living expenses) require students to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, annually, before they can be considered—even aid that is not directly tied to FAFSA submission and/or requires a separate application—due to the fact that the FAFSA provides key information needed to determine a student's financial need.

IMPORTANT NOTE: FAFSA = FEDERAL STUDENT AID APPLICATION FORM (the FAFSA, itself, is NOT a form of financial aid)
→ Check out the **Foster Care-Specific FAFSA Fact Sheet, for Nevada Students** for more information on FAFSA completion/submission!

The different TYPES of financial aid that a student can obtain—all of which directly or indirectly require FAFSA completion/submission (and, in some cases, an additional form or application)—are as follows (SOURCE):

1) **"GIFT AID"** = Financial aid that is awarded to a student—based on financial need, foster care history and/or other specialized eligibility criteria—that DOES NOT NEED TO BE REPAID (i.e. it is a "gift"), provided that the student is maintaining sufficient attendance in their classes and adhering to all financial aid regulations:
   a) **Course Registration (Enrollment) Fee Waivers** (such as the **NSHE Foster Youth Fee Waiver**—which requires submitting both the FAFSA, annually, and the **electronic fee waiver form**, once per NSHE school)
   b) **Vouchers** (such as the foster care-specific **Chafee Education(al) and Training Voucher**, known as "**ETV**," which is administered by the federal child welfare system and requires submitting both the FAFSA form and an additional application)
   c) **Grants** (**federal**, **state**, **college/university-specific**, and/or **private or nonprofit organization-specific**—many of which students are automatically considered for after FAFSA submission, and some of which require an extra application)
   d) **Scholarships** (from many different types of sources, most of which require students to submit an additional application)
2) **Federal Work-Study** = Financial aid that income-eligible students can earn through campus-based employment, to help pay for their expenses → This is a **Federal Student Aid** program, so eligibility is determined based on FAFSA information. It provides part-time employment opportunities to enrolled students with demonstrated financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay for their education and living expenses.
3) **Student Loan** = Financial aid that students can *borrow*—if they lack sufficient "gift aid" options—that NEEDS TO BE REPAID, WITH INTEREST/EXTRA FEES → Student loans are the **least beneficial form of financial aid** because they need to be repaid, with *interest*/extra fees (*interest* = a charge for borrowed money that is generally a percentage of the amount borrowed). They **should be the last resort for students**—after all other possible financial aid options have been exhausted. If needed, **federal student loans** from the *U.S. Department of Education* (ED) are the best option, as they have lower, fixed interest rates and more flexibility.

UNLV · University of Nevada, Reno · Nevada State University · College of Southern Nevada (Investing in Our Future. Students First.) · Great Basin College · TMCC Truckee Meadows Community College · Western Nevada College

Why is financial aid so important?

Financial aid (or student aid) is important because, unlike Kindergarten-12th grade courses, students are expected to pay for postsecondary education/college courses (college/university course registration fees). College students also need to pay for special course fees for some courses (such as additional fees for distance education/online courses, laboratory fees, and special course supplies fees), per-semester student fees (such as the Health Service fee), and books/materials needed for their courses. Additionally, the majority of college students—even those who are working—need financial aid to help them cover their critical living expenses while enrolled in courses. These expenses—most notably housing, food, and transportation—are factored into the student's full annual **Cost of Attendance (COA)** that is calculated by their college/university, for each academic year. Financial aid makes college more accessible, especially when students can secure ample "gift aid" (i.e. financial aid that does NOT need to be repaid) that eliminates the need for excessive student loans (which need to be REPAID, with *interest*/extra fees!) or work hours. This allows students to focus on their coursework, rather than scrambling to figure out how to fund their postsecondary/college education and cover their personal expenses/bills.

QUESTIONS about which financial aid options YOU may qualify for?

1) Check out **PAGE 2 of this fact sheet**, as well as these comprehensive financial aid and FAFSA resources for Nevada students with foster care histories: a) **Nevada Fostering Success Financial Aid Guide**; b) **Nevada Fostering Success FAFSA Guide** (step-by-step completion instructions); and c) **Comprehensive Nevada Fostering Success Financial Aid Toolkit**.
2) Contact **Laura Obrist**, statewide contact for the **NSHE Fostering Success Initiative** (**lobrist@nshe.nevada.edu**; **702-522-7035** - call/text).

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Foster Care-Specific Financial Aid Options for Current/Former Nevada Child Welfare Dependents

1) **Foster Youth Fee Waiver — Administered by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE)**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** Students who are/were dependents of the Nevada foster care system, at and/or after age 13 (eligibility ends on 26th birthday), and are enrolled at one or more NSHE schools (UNLV, UNR, NSU, CSN, GBC, TMCC, and/or WNC)
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Directly WAIVES *most* major course registration (enrollment) fees at any of the 7 degree-granting NSHE schools (exact amount waived = base course registration fees + any applicable lower-division lab fees for all eligible courses)
   - ⇒ **How to Apply/Qualify:** 1) Review the initial and continuing eligibility requirements outlined in our **Who, What, When, Where, & Why Fact Sheet**; 2) Review and complete the step-by-step fee waiver form access and submission instructions provided in our **Steps to Obtain Fact Sheet**—including completing/submitting your FAFSA, admissions application, fully/accurately completed **Fee Waiver Form**, and supporting Nevada foster care history documentation; and 3) Check out our **FAQs Fact Sheet**, for more info, and contact us for support!

2) **Federal Chafee Education(al) and Training Voucher (ETV) — Administered by the U.S. DHHS Administration for Children & Families (Designated Nevada ETV Administrators: Clark County Social Service & the Children's Cabinet)**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** Students who are currently in foster care, aged out of foster care, or left foster care after their 16th birthday
     - For students who exited foster care at/after age 16, but before aging out of care, eligibility depends on the state administering the funds (Nevada has more restrictive requirements than some states). Contact your STATE OF DEPENDENCY first!
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Provides up to $5,000 per academic year, for up to 5 years (whether or not the years are consecutive) or until your 26th birthday (whichever comes first)—for any school and/or living expenses within your annual *Cost of Attendance* determined by your school
   - ⇒ **How to Apply/Qualify in Nevada:** 1) Review the ETV eligibility information and access the application on the **NV DCFS ETV webpage**; 2) Contact your region's ETV administrator: **ETV@ClarkCountyNV.gov** (for current/former Clark County foster care dependents and out-of-state students residing in Clark County who are unable to receive funding from their state of dependency) OR **ccarstairs@childrenscabinet.org** (for current/former foster care dependents from any other NV county and out-of-state students residing in any other NV county who are unable to receive funding from their state of dependency); and 3) Complete/submit the application, which is updated and needs to be resubmitted every year, along with your supporting foster care history documentation and other required documents.

3) **Otto A. Huth Scholarship Fund — Administered by the Community Foundation of Northern Nevada**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** Students who are about to age out/have already aged out of foster care, in Nevada, and are pursuing postsecondary education at a U.S. school (2- or 4-year college/university—including certain Workforce Training/Development Programs offered at public community colleges and elsewhere)
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Provides up to $10,000 per academic year, for up to 5 years, with a maximum total award of $40,000 to any given student (based on need)—for course registration (enrollment) fees (for both in-state and out-of-state students)/tuition fees (for out-of-state students ONLY), on-campus room and board, campus-based meal plans, books, and student health insurance

4) **Foster Children Education Scholarship — Administered by the Community Foundation of Northern Nevada**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** Students who are/were in foster care in Nevada, were never legally adopted (or expected to be), and are pursuing postsecondary education at a U.S. school (2- or 4-year college/university—including certain Workforce Training/Development Programs offered at public community colleges and elsewhere)
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Provides up to $10,000 per academic year, based on need—for any school and/or living expenses within your annual *Cost of Attendance* (course registration fees, student fees, and book costs are prioritized, followed by other school/living expenses)

5) **Career Opportunity Scholarship — Administered by St. Jude' s Ranch for Children**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** Students who are/were participants in a St. Jude's Ranch for Children program and are pursuing postsecondary education at a U.S. school (2- or 4-year college/university—including certain Workforce Training/Development Programs offered at public community colleges and elsewhere)
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Provides funding (amount varies) toward course registration fees (for both in-state and out-of-state students)/tuition fees (for out-of-state students ONLY), laboratory fees, student housing, books, school supplies (including computers and calculators), and on-the-job training

6) **Children's Service Guild of Southern Nevada Scholarship — Administered by the Public Education Foundation**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** High school seniors in Clark County, NV who have overcome personal challenges, have been touched by the Family Court System (Family Services/Juvenile Justice Services), are pursuing postsecondary education (2- or 4-year college/university—including certain Workforce Training/Development Programs offered at public community colleges and elsewhere)
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Provides $2,500 per academic year, toward course registration fees (for both in-state and out-of-state students)/tuition fees (for out-of-state students ONLY), and/or other "appropriate educational expenses" within your annual *Cost of Attendance*

7) **Village of Becoming Scholarship — Administered by Village of Becoming**
   - ⇒ **Who It's For:** Students who are from low-income backgrounds and/or otherwise underprivileged home environments—particularly those who have experienced foster care and/or homelessness—and are pursuing postsecondary education (2- or 4-year college/university—including Workforce Training/Development Programs offered at public community colleges and elsewhere)
   - ⇒ **What it Covers:** Provides funding ($1,000-$3,000 per academic year) toward any expenses within your annual *Cost of Attendance*